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THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

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THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGES OF MODERN THOUGHT

By

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TO THE

REV. RALPH WARDLAW THOMPSON,
M.A., D.D.,

IN AFFECTION AS A FRIEND, AND GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION FOR THE FAITH, WISDOM, AND COURAGE OF HIS SERVICE FOR MANY YEARS OF THE CAUSE, IN THE INTERESTS OF WHICH THIS BOOK HAS BEEN WRITTEN

PREFACE

The following Lectures were delivered in connection with the Ancient Merchant Lectures in the Board Room of the London Missionary Society in January and February as a token of my deep and abiding interest in the work of the Society, and with the desire of furthering its appeal to the churches as far as I am able. I have made use of several articles, previously published, in the preparation of this course of lectures.

ALFRED E. GARVIE

NEW COLLEGE
12th February 1914

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THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGES OF MODERN THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION

(1) The Foreign Mission enterprise is in a perilous position, demanding serious consideration, both at home and abroad. The opportunities abroad are widening, and the resources of the Churches at home are enlarging ; and nevertheless there is, if not altogether arrested, yet much delayed development owing to inadequate interest in this first task of the Christian Church. This situation compels us to ask the question whether the argument for Foreign Missions is being put in the most convincing way, whether the appeal is not being made to motives which have lost their urgency, and with reasons the cogency of which is spent. (a) If we compare the theological situation at the beginning of the nineteenth century,

when the modern missionary enterprise was launched, and that at the beginning of the twentieth century, how many and how great are the changes ! The horizon of knowledge has been widened, and the prospect of thought enlarged. Science, philosophy, literary and historical criticism have affected, and must affect Christian theology, as the changing intellectual interpretation of the unchanging Christian faith.

(b) It is true that there are Christian believers who do not, and who it may be even cannot distinguish the faith and the interpretation, and seek to preserve the permanence of their faith by the rigidity of their theology. To them, all these modern influences, which have affected theology, are evil and evil only. For them the motive of, and the reasons for, Foreign Missions are almost quite the same as a century ago. And let it be acknowledged appreciatively and gratefully that many of these theologically conservative Christians are among the

most generous and devoted supporters of the cause. As far as they are concerned, the problem to which I wish to address myself does not exist at all.

(c) But on the other hand there are Christian men and women either holding aloof altogether from the Foreign Mission cause, or giving it far less thought and help than they might do, because they have been affected by these modern influences to such a change of their theology, as weakens the motive of, and discredits the reasons for this duty. The urgency of the obligation seems to them to fail with the passing of the theology with which it has been hitherto so closely associated. It is a common assumption that only those who keep their eyes closed to the fresh light of the age can still keep an unshaken belief in Foreign Missions. It is worth considering whether this assumption is true, whether interest in, and support of Foreign Missions must depend on a theology which rejects and opposes itself to modern thought.

(2) An additional reason for the consideration of this fundamental question may be found in the foreign field itself. (a) It may be that the missionary abroad is not so quickly or so easily affected by the changing intellectual conditions which do affect the theology of the minister at home. His work often so absorbs his enthusiasm and energy that he has no thought of recasting his creed, and it does not allow him to keep in as close touch as can the minister at home with the new inquiries or theories of scholarship. But there is abounding evidence that the difficulties and hindrances of his work force him to face questions which go to the very root of Christian thinking. Must he enforce on his converts, unmodified by their needs, the theology he was taught? Missionaries do bear witness that the demands of their work may force on them a theological crisis.

(b) This problem is more likely to emerge in those fields where on the one hand an ancient civilisation and culture

opposes its intellectual claims to the Christian faith, and the missionary is led to ask himself whether he can so change his theology as to adapt it to the new environment; or where, on the other hand, the civilisation and culture of Europe are being introduced, and with these the varied intellectual influences which are affecting theology at home; and the missionary must decide whether he will treat all these influences as friend or as foe.

(3) The consideration of these questions is thus forced upon us by conditions both at home and abroad. (a) I approach them as one who has endeavoured as far as possible to gather the mental treasures and to grasp the intellectual tendencies of the age, who has kept his eyes open to welcome every glimpse of fresh light on the relations of the soul and God, who has been led to modify his theology in many important respects, but who not only preserves unshaken and unshakable the certainty

and confidence of his personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour and Lord, but even retains undiminished, nay, even increased, his interest in, and enthusiasm for the work of Foreign Missions.

(b) I even go further than this, and maintain that, as in Samson's riddle, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," so in this modern thought, which seems to many a reason for being indifferent to Foreign Missions, we can find an argument, cogent and urgent, for spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and also the guidance which is so keenly felt by many missionaries as an imperative necessity in regard to the best methods by which, in the changing conditions of the various mission fields, they can commend to all peoples the Gospel of Christ and Him Crucified as the power and wisdom of God unto the salvation of all men.

(4) What I propose to do in these

Lectures is this, to consider the changes, to me the necessary and desirable changes which our modern thought has brought about, as these bear on Foreign Missions. It is urged that modern historical and literary criticism has disproved the claim made for the Bible that it is the literature of a divine revelation and redemption ; and we must show that the Bible has not lost its moral value and religious significance. Again, it is urged that we cannot now preach the Gospel of salvation from the eternal fire by the sacrificial blood of Christ ; and we must show how man still needs salvation, and how the sacrifice of Christ still avails. Once more it is argued that modern science and philosophy have so changed our view of the world and man and God, that our *geocentric* and *anthropocentric* theology, which affirms that the Son of God became man, and died for man on earth, must appear absurd to all who have any sense of proportion, and we must boldly challenge the standard of judgment thus assumed.

Further, it is maintained that, as every race has its own religion, and as the higher religions possess also their sacred books, they do not need our faith or our Scriptures ; and we must therefore prove a universal necessity which Christ alone can meet. Lastly, that methods of work in the mission field itself must change is generally admitted, and we must try to determine the nature and extent of these changes.

I

CHANGES OF MODERN THOUGHT AS REGARDS THE BIBLE

(1) There is a general impression that the historical and literary criticism of the Bible has lowered its authority and weakened its influence. (a) For this impression the reckless defenders, as well as the ruthless assailants, of every traditional opinion regarding it must be held in some measure to blame. Timid and ignorant Christians have been assured that the higher critics are engaged in the work of tearing the Bible in pieces, and so have been led to believe that the Christian faith can be preserved only by refusing to recognise any of the methods, or to accept any of the results of modern Biblical scholarship. Unbelief has used both methods and results for its own ends.

(b) It may be pointed out, however, that there are many scholars who are accounted higher critics, who love and revere the Bible not a whit less than the reader who knows nothing of these conclusions of scholarship: from which fact we may draw the presumption that there is no necessary antagonism between this modern scholarship and Christian faith. I desire quite frankly and freely to bear my own testimony that, although my interests and pursuits lie mainly in the region of philosophy and theology for the defence and exposition of the Christian faith, yet, having kept myself informed as fully as I have been able regarding the results of this modern method, and having been led to approve and accept most of its assured conclusions, I have not found the Bible any less precious morally or religiously, but much more intelligible and credible as the literature of the unique, supreme, and final divine revelation.

(c) There are higher critics who would

exclude the supernatural, or miraculous action of God, in the revelation recorded in the Bible, and would treat it as the literature of a natural religious development ; but on the other hand there are critics, just as eminent as scholars, who do not hesitate to affirm their unfaltering belief in such supernatural or miraculous action of God. So it was with the man around whom the first fierce battle about the Higher Criticism waged, William Robertson Smith. He held to the end of his life his early belief in the inspiration of the Bible. This, too, is the position I maintain without any sense of inconsistency or compromise. Just as the acceptance of the theory of evolution does not contradict, but only modifies the statement of the doctrine of the creation of the world by God, even so the acceptance of the results of the Higher Criticism is not opposed to the belief in the Bible as the literature of a divine revelation, such as has not been given to any other people, which also is

destined yet to be the light of God for all the nations of the earth.

(2) It may be necessary in a few words to indicate what the Higher Criticism is. (a) I may first of all rid your minds of a prejudice which the phrase itself may arouse, and of which some of the opponents of the movement, who must have known better, have not been ashamed of taking advantage. The examination of the text of the Bible, the comparison of variant readings of the different MSS. we possess, is called the "Lower" Criticism. In distinction from this, the study of the contents of the Bible to determine the date, the authorship, the occasion, the purpose, the literary character, and the historical value of the separate writings has been called the Higher Criticism. The phrase is no assumption of superiority on the part of the critic.

(b) This study of the writings themselves to discover what account on all these matters they give of themselves

has led to conclusions which contradict traditions about these matters, which have been handed down in the Jewish and Christian Church, many of which, however, are mere conjectures, and rest on no evidence in the writings themselves. Yet the common assumption of the opponents of the movement is that to reject these traditions is to challenge the authority of the Bible itself. On such questions as date, authorship, occasion, purpose, the testimony in the writings which the Higher Criticism seeks to discover is surely much more to be trusted than any traditions, Jewish or Christian.

(3) There are two questions of the Higher Criticism in the answers to which it may be admitted more serious issues for Christian faith are involved : these are the literary character and the historical value of the writings.

(a) For those who would treat the Bible as a theological creed and as a moral code, equally valid and authoritative in all its parts, it may be difficult to admit

that it contains a great deal of poetry—much that cannot be taken with prosaic literalness ; but if we remember that Jesus taught in parables, that the loftiest visions and the deepest emotions of man have sought in imaginative literature an expression which plain prose could not give, it will not be incredible to us that God in His self-revelation should use one of the noblest endowments of man as the channel of His communication. The treatment of the problem of suffering in Job is not less sublime because it is a dramatic poem, and not a prose history. The Book of the Revelation is no less comforting and sustaining for Christian faith, because we now recognise that it is an Apocalypse, using numbers, symbols, etc., to express faith's interpretation of current history, and not prophecy yet to be fulfilled in the very letter.

(b) It may be disconcerting at first for us to learn that most of the records of the Old Testament cannot be regarded as contemporary testimony, and that the

methods of ancient historians were so unlike our own that we cannot accept all their statements without careful testing of their historical value. But if we can, after this testing has been done, retain our confidence in the general trustworthiness of the record of the progressive divine revelation to the Hebrew nation, our Christian faith need not suffer any real loss from this intellectual readjustment. If the historical books of the New Testament could be shown to be mainly, if not wholly, legend, then assuredly our Christian faith would be deprived of its sure foundation in historical facts. If the Word did not become flesh, if He did not reveal the Father, if He did not redeem men in His death and resurrection, if He does not live and reign, then truly our faith were vain, and we should be of all men most miserable. But it can be said confidently that the Higher Criticism involves no such extreme consequences. Although the tendency of German scholarship is more

negative than that of Great Britain, yet the extravagances of a Drews, who would reduce the historical reality of Jesus to a myth, are being disproved by the great body of the higher critics. There may be discussions about some of the minor details of the historical records among critics who are also Christian believers ; but in so far as Christian faith demands as its object the historical reality of the divine revelation, progressive in the Hebrew nation, and consummated in Christ, it need not fear, but may welcome modern scholarship.

(4) Accepting the change in our view of the Bible which this modern scholarship involves, can we as certainly and confidently as ever assert not only its great difference from, but even its entire superiority to the other sacred scriptures ? We shall in the Fourth Lecture return to the change in the estimate of these books which our modern knowledge of them has brought, but meanwhile we are only concerned with what

gives to our Bible its uniqueness, and its consequent claim for the acceptance of mankind. (a) *First of all* the history as interpreted by the prophecy of the Hebrew nation presents to us a world-wide divine providence, so ordering the movements of the nations that their contact in turn with the people chosen as the earthen vessel to hold the heavenly treasure of this divine revelation subserved the divine purpose. Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome —the great empires of the Ancient World —are all used as the instruments of the divine discipline of the elect nation by which in its historical development it was fitted to be the vehicle of the progressive revelation. Greece and Rome not only affected the history of the Jewish nation, but contributed to the preparation for the spread of the Gospel in the early centuries of the history of the Christian Church. Of the other empires may we not say that their interest for us is almost entirely confined to such

influence as they had in the history of the chosen people? A divine revelation with a divine redemption at its heart, as we shall afterwards more clearly see, for the communication of which the necessary conditions were produced by so all-embracing a divine providence, surely cannot have less than a world-wide destination in God's purpose. It is not the native religion of one people which in Foreign Missions is offered to all the nations. As the Bible, seen in the light of modern scholarship, shows, it is the religion in which has been fulfilled a long-continued and a far-extending divine purpose, embracing in its scope not the history of one small nation, but of several great empires. Has it not a claim such as no other religion has from this one consideration alone?

(b) Within this human history, ordered by the divine providence, stands, interpreting it, the succession of Hebrew prophets who claimed to be sent by God, to understand God's ways, and to make

known His will whether in judgment on impenitent sin, or mercy to penitent faith. It was surely the same divine providence which, in ordering the course of history, also endowed and empowered these interpreters of God's mind, heart, and will. Doctrines of faith and duty came not abstractly but concretely in the meaning given to current events by the prophets. Each prophet had this vital relation to his own age as the interpreter of God in its failures or successes, its fears or hopes; and at the same time he stood in as vital connection with his predecessors or successors, receiving a moral and spiritual inheritance from the past and contributing a like bequest to the future. Through this succession of prophets there was imparted a progressive revelation. It is one of the greatest services which modern scholarship has rendered that it has exhibited more clearly and fully than in the older view was possible, this twofold relation, the contemporary significance of each

prophet, and the progressive value of the line of prophets. No other religion exhibits such a succession of prophets ; in no other sacred literature can we trace even the approach to so progressive a revelation.

(c) This progressive revelation was not theoretical, but practical ; it was not primarily concerned with an idea of God or an ideal for man : both emerge in it, but in subordination to the personal relation of God to His people in its history as the fulfilment of His purpose. That purpose is redemptive. The late Dr Bruce, in his book on *The Chief End of Revelation*, insists on this dominant characteristic of revelation. The history of the Hebrew nation began in the redemptive act of the Exodus, and the history of the Jewish people in that of the Return from Exile ; and the centuries between were filled with instances of God's deliverances, mercy taking the place of judgment as soon as disobedience was followed by penitence. Even if the

course of events did not actually fit into this framework of divine providence as uniformly and exactly as the historical records represent, yet modern scholarship warrants the assertion that for the chosen people God was known as Saviour. This characteristic is not only shown in the history ; it is seen in the prophecy as well. While the prophets had a message to their contemporaries—and while their specific predictions related to the immediate future, yet, through the prophets there came to the nation a hope of a final, satisfying salvation above and beyond what the immediate future did or could yield. No other sacred literature strikes as clearly or often this note of redemption ; in no other religion is hope so dominant. Man's deepest necessity shall yet find God's highest satisfaction.

(d) This hope had its fulfilment in Jesus Christ the Lord, not literally, but transcendently, for fulfilment was truer, better, and more gracious than the hope

at its brightest had ever dared, or been able to be. Modern scholarship has displaced the old argument from types and predictions ; but it has given us a far more satisfying and inspiring conception of the relation of Christ to the Old Testament as the full realisation of all its moral and religious aspirations and expectations. One may venture to affirm that the newer view of the Bible makes it appear more *Christocentric*. In the historical personality the revelation of the divine reality and the human ideal is perfected, and the redemption of man unto God is achieved. Can the founder of any other religion be brought into comparison with Jesus ? Of Confucius in his unspiritual propriety and of Mohammed in his defective morality it is not necessary even to speak. In character, purpose, and spirit Gautama the Buddha seems to come nearer to Jesus ; yet how great the difference ! Gautama discovers the secret of salvation and imparts it to others ; but

each of his disciples must save himself : and the salvation is escape from the evil of life by the extinction of consciousness. Jesus realises salvation not for Himself, but for others, through a sacrifice of which Gautama's self-renunciation falls far short. His disciples find it in Him as the living Saviour, by faith, as a personal union to Him of dependence, devotion, and submission. His salvation is deliverance from sin, victory over death, life more abundant. Modern scholarship does not rob us of this Christ, but throws His person only into bolder relief ; it does not alter His Gospel, which the Bible enshrines, but rather shows how central it is in the divine revelation. No such master and no such message can any other religion or sacred scriptures offer.

(e) This Higher Criticism has been applied to the New Testament, and what it yields us is a twofold gain. (i) *First of all*, it emphasises personal experience of the truth and grace of Christ as the

distinctive qualification of the writers. The source of the records of the Gospels is the witness of those who saw and heard Jesus in His earthly ministry. In these are preserved for us the impressions made by His historic reality on men receptive of and responsive to His influence. It is necessary to examine these records to discover how much is direct historical testimony, and how much added theological interpretation ; but the Gospels do make us contemporaries of the Word become flesh, as He tabernacled among men, so that we can behold His glory as of the only begotten of the Father. If in the Epistles there is more theological interpretation, they are no less testimony to what the living and reigning Christ proved Himself to be in the experience of believers in Him. We search in vain all other sacred literature for a testimony to any religious founder by any disciple, such as Paul offers to Christ in all his writings.

(ii) *Secondly*, modern scholarship en-

ables us to discover what terms or thoughts in the theological interpretation were borrowed from the Jewish or Gentile environment, but at the same time exhibits only more clearly that here we are in contact with a moral and spiritual reality, the human experience of the divine salvation in Christ, which neither Jew nor Gentile had hitherto known, and which neither could ever have conceived.

(5) Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show that the change of view regarding the Bible offers no reason why Foreign Missions should be less zealously pursued. But not only so, the methods of modern scholarship can be directly helpful to the missionary in three ways. (a) Among the educated men in China, India, and Japan there is some knowledge of extreme views of a negative character regarding the Bible, which the Rationalist Free Press and other organisations, hostile to Christianity, make it their business to popularise. These

attacks can be met not by repudiating modern methods of study, but by showing that the conclusions drawn by unbelief are not warranted by them. Objections to the morality or religion of Old Testament heroes or saints can be disproved by the frank and full recognition of the progressive character of divine revelation and the correction of the earlier by the later stages. No missionary need defend the character of David as perfect from the higher standpoint which even the unbeliever owes to Christ: it is Christ's perfection alone he needs to maintain. Again, attacks on the science of the Bible fall futile, if the missionary puts forward the view held to-day of the nature, purpose, and method of revelation. As European civilisation and culture spread throughout Asia, the Christian missionary will not be able to meet the objections which the educated classes will draw from their new knowledge, unless he can defend the Bible in such a way as does full justice to the

claims of modern thought, and, as has just been shown, in so doing, he need sacrifice nothing of the moral value or the religious significance of the Bible as the literature of divine revelation and human redemption.

(b) Further, the confidence that the adherents of other religions display regarding the superiority of their own scriptures to the Christian can be disturbed only by a candid and courageous literary and historical criticism of them. It is certain that the Buddhist scriptures or the Mohammedan would not emerge as unscathed from the ordeal of an examination by the rigorous methods of modern scholarship. The Christian missionary cannot ask the Buddhist or the Mohammedan to subject his Bible to a scrutiny to which he refuses to submit his own Scriptures. Correspondence with missionaries in the field has convinced me that there are far-seeing ones who are recognising that, while the application of the newer methods to our

Bible leaves us still a message from God to man, such as all the world needs, a like procedure in regard to the other sacred scriptures will afford only firmer ground of attack upon them as insufficient and ineffective for the moral and religious ends in regard to which a superiority over our Bible is claimed on their behalf.

(c) In the modern view of the Bible it is recognised that there is kernel and there is husk : in the religion of the Hebrew nation, for instance, there are survivals of lower forms of belief and worship, which the progressive divine revelation has not altogether suppressed, but has transformed by its influence ; and there are also borrowings from other religions which have been used by the higher religion as subservient to its purpose. To take the most striking illustrations of these two facts. (i) Sacrifice in the Old Testament shows many distinct affinities with sacrifice as it is found in other religions. As

the story of Jephtha shows, human sacrifice was a possibility, even when it had ceased to be a common practice. The story of the sacrifice of Isaac is the condemnation of this older practice from the standpoint of the unfolding revelation. The popular conception of sacrifice as a means of securing divine favour, or averting divine displeasure, apart from any moral conditions, is exposed in the prophetic denunciation. For animal sacrifice the progressive revelation substitutes the contrite heart (Ps. li.) and the consecrated life (Isa. liii.).

(ii) Again, in the first three chapters in Genesis we have myths common to the Hebrew nation and some of its Semitic kindred, as the Babylonian tablets show, which have been used as the channel for the communication of the truth of the divine revelation. The polytheistic form of the original myth is changed into the monotheistic. Details offending the finer religious sense are omitted, although what now seems to us

a quaint and naïve anthropomorphism remains. A moral and religious significance is given to the story of the Fall. Here we can see how the Divine Spirit in the writers purified and elevated what they had borrowed. Modern scholarship does not compel the missionary to confront the cosmologies, wild and fantastic as these generally are, of other religions with these records in Genesis as literal history. He can rather show how the religion of revelation had dealt with a similar cosmology in the Babylonian religion. He can emphasise the moral and spiritual elements these narratives contain, and challenge the other cosmologies as lacking in these higher interests. By his interpretation of these chapters from this modern standpoint he can construct a convincing argument for the inferiority of the other sacred scriptures, and the superiority in religious significance and moral value of his own Bible, even when it is using and adapting to its purpose similar material of popular

beliefs. Might not the missionary learn also from the method of the divine revelation in regard to these lower elements, which it does not suppress, but transform, how he may find the prints of contact and lines of least resistance for the communication of his own Gospel in the beliefs or rites of those whom by its acceptance he is seeking to win for God and goodness in Christ Jesus ?

II

CHANGES OF MODERN THOUGHT AS REGARDS THE GOSPEL

(1) In the preceding Lecture it was shown that the modern view of the Bible makes it more than ever *Christocentric*. Revelation culminates in Incarnation. The Gospel is the heart of the Holy Scriptures. Now, in regard even to the Gospel, last century witnessed a great change of thought; but is the change such as to justify our being less interested in, and less energetic about Foreign Missions than were the founders of the great societies for sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth? This is the question to which we must address ourselves. The changes of thought relate to the *need*, the *means*, and the *end* of salvation. We may take these in order.

(2) During the latter half of last century there was much discussion about *eternal punishment.* When I was a boy, it was thought a heresy of the deepest dye to question or doubt the everlasting duration of future penalty for all who did not die believing in Christ. In some minds, however, there may have been some mental reservation regarding the destiny of the heathen who had never heard the Gospel.

(a) Appeals for Foreign Missions were sometimes enforced in former days by the consideration of the numbers of the heathen who, because they had not heard and believed the Gospel, had perished eternally. Such a consideration would not now persuade, but would repel most minds. One cannot but wonder how those who seriously entertained it could find any comfort, joy or hope in life, and still more how they could hold that the God who could so deal with His creatures was love. One might have expected despair or atheism to be the

result of such a creed. The doctrine of eternal punishment is itself difficult to believe even as regards those who consciously and voluntarily reject the Gospel; but this belief in the eternal punishment of the heathen is less tolerable still. We cannot now believe that men will be punished for not having believed a Gospel which they never heard, and so never had the choice of believing or not. We must believe that the Judge of all the earth will do right ; and that He at least judges men according to the light they have, and not according to a light that was never theirs.

(b) While we must now hold this view, if we are to believe at all in God as Father of all mankind, yet it is not a legitimate inference from this belief that it does not matter whether men have the Gospel or not. Yet this is the excuse some offer for their indifference to the missionary cause. They only show how little Christ is to them, and how little they have allowed Him to do for them. To the

man whom Christ has fully and truly saved by the grace of His Cross and His Spirit, there is simply an infinite difference between life in Christ and life without Christ here and now ; and as life beyond is but the harvest of what is sown in this life, there will continue to be an infinite difference. Contrast the physical, social, moral, and spiritual condition of the peoples who have received the Gospel of Christ with that of those who as yet know it not, and then dare to say that even as regards this earthly life it does not matter whether the Gospel is preached or not ! Those who indulge themselves in such an idea usually boast their breadth of thought ; but here they show surely the shallowness of breadth. Ultimate future destiny seems to be the only thing they concern themselves about : if the same end can be anticipated for all, they seem to think nothing else meanwhile matters. But this is moral neutrality as well as religious indifference. Surely it does matter whether men think

truly, love tenderly, and live holily here and now, or are deceitful, cruel, and unclean. Surely it does matter whether old age is honoured and tended, or exposed to perish; womanhood protected against lust and violence, and childhood kept innocent and gracious, or whether in social relations might is right. Surely it does matter whether barbarism is perpetuated, or civilisation is advanced; whether men live in terror of demons, and seek to propitiate them by cruel and abominable rites, or trust the Heavenly Father and serve Him with a good and a godly life. Surely it matters whether death is darkness and desolation to the soul, or brings the fulfilment of a promise of blessed and glorious immortality.

(c) It may be objected, however, to this line of argument that in Christendom there is abounding vice, crime, and violence. But the answer to this objection is obvious. It is not because, but is spite of the Gospel of the grace of God that Christendom is so defective.

Nations bearing the Christian name are not truly and fully Christian. We must not blame other religions for all the moral evils which prevail in the peoples by whom they are professed. But it may be shown that there are moral evils directly resulting from the beliefs and rites of some of these religions, as impurity and cruelty in Hinduism, or polygamy and slavery in Islam ; that there are other moral evils which are not condemned, as the exposure of girls in China ; and that all these other faiths are proving their impotence to inspire and sustain the best moral life, such as the Christian faith alone is able to produce as the fruit of the Spirit. To this comparison of Christianity with other religions, however, we must return in the Fourth Lecture; but it has been necessary to meet this objection to the present argument.

(d) Even as regards the ultimate destiny of all, there is no warrant whatever in the truths of the Christian

religion, or in the facts of human life, for affirming that all men at last will be saved and blessed. To the dogmatism which affirmed the damnation of all who had not believed because they had never heard the Gospel, it is reckless folly to oppose the dogmatism which maintains the salvation of all men, whether they have heard and believed the Gospel or not. Even if we may venture to cherish the hope that those who have never heard of the Christian salvation may, in God's inscrutable wisdom and inexhaustible grace, be brought into such relation to Christ, even in the unseen realm, as will determine whether they love the darkness or the light, yet this remote probability of thought cannot be allowed even for a moment to weaken the duty imposed by the immediate certainty of faith, that he who here and now trusts in Jesus as his Saviour experiences an eternal salvation. Whatever God in His mercy may do for those whom the Gospel of His grace has not reached

in this life, yet, as there is a moral continuity in human experience and character, it is certain that the future life of those who fall asleep in Jesus, and that of those who die without Christ, will differ as much as their present life does. The physical event of death itself, or even the divine omnipotence if we could conceive of its exercise for such an end, could not abolish these moral and religious differences, and place on an equality before God, with the same opportunity for further development, the saint and the sinner, the Christian and the heathen. At the root of this view of universal salvation with or apart from Christian faith there is an essentially non-moral assumption, that God can save a man in spite of himself, regardless of his moral character or religious experience, and that the value of the salvation so obtained is independent of the moral or religious development which it partly presupposes and partly produces.

(e) One other consideration may be

added. I myself believe that Christ is so central to God's purpose for mankind, that His salvation is so final, universal, and perfect, that I cannot accept the solution of the problem of the heathen which I used to hear advanced as adequate. It was said that the future destiny of the heathen would be determined by the measure in which they had walked according to the light given to them, the consistency of their conduct with the law written in their hearts. Can God as Father be satisfied with a legal relation to the majority of mankind, and a gracious attitude to a select minority? I am compelled to conclude that no man's final destiny will be determined until he has had, in this life or another, an opportunity of receiving or rejecting the grace of God in Christ. If God wills this relation of all mankind to Himself, He surely wills that this relation should be begun for man's good and His glory as soon as possible—in this life—and not in another. If we value Christ as

our present Saviour and Lord, can we be content with what is after all only a conjecture, and no certainty, that He may become Saviour and Lord to so many for whose salvation He endured and endures travail of soul in a future life? Why should any large portion of mankind be robbed in this life of the treasures of His truth, the riches of His grace, and the blessing of the eternal life in Him? Why should He be denied the satisfaction of His travail of soul for all mankind?

(3) It is probable, however, that there has been even a greater change of thought as regards *the means of salvation.* While it would not be just to the older evangelicalism to assign to it the position that a man is saved by believing a plan of salvation or a theory of the atonement, as it did maintain that saving faith will be productive of good works, yet its incautious language did lend some countenance to such a misrepresentation. Now, however, we have the oppo-

site extreme. It is maintained, even by professing Christians, that it is more important how a man lives than what he believes, as if creed and conduct could be thus sharply distinguished and opposed. So long as the heathen live in the light that they already have, why should we seek to impose upon them our doctrines? To this question a threefold answer is to be given.

(a) In modern liberal evangelicalism one now seldom hears of a plan of salvation to be believed or of a theory of the atonement to be understood as the condition of salvation. What is offered is a personal living, gracious, and mighty Saviour and Lord, Who is to be received and possessed by a personal faith, which includes trust and surrender as well as belief. There is a change of view as regards both the object and the subject of the saving faith. It may sound plausible to say that we should not impose our doctrines on men of another faith. It is irreverent, ungrateful, and ungene-

rous to say that we should not offer other men the same Saviour and Lord who is our help and our hope. It is dishonour to Him and injury to them to withhold Him from them. No man who has himself felt how gracious the Lord is can wish that others should not share this satisfying experience. So, too, the faith which is personal dependence on, communion with, and submission to Jesus Christ, is so infinitely more than a change of belief regarding doctrine that it cannot be made to appear of trifling importance whether men exercise it or not.

(b) Secondly, can the light in which some critics of Foreign Missions bid the heathen live their best be compared for a moment with the Light of the World, either morally or religiously? Admitting as generously as we can all that is excellent in the moral theory and practice of the non-Christian religions, can there be any doubt that the Christian ideal is the largest and the loftiest? To take the most favourable example, the

ethics of Buddhism have often been compared with Christian ethics; but while the former can produce only a morality of monastic renunciation of the world, the latter inspires the morality of universal progress for humanity. Surely the moral imperative requires of us not only that we ourselves should love the highest when we see it, but that we should seek to win others to share both the vision and the affection of the highest. We do not love our neighbour as ourselves unless we put within his reach the highest moral good we have ourselves. We are not fully moral ourselves unless we desire and strive for the universal scope of the highest morality.

(c) In this objection, *thirdly*, there lurks a very common error, the assumption that morality is independent of religion, and that we can divorce the one from the other without loss. A code offers only a pattern for the moral life; a creed affords the power by which

the moral life is shaped according to the pattern. Even Comte, who regarded the theological as the lowest stage in man's intellectual development, was compelled, when he embarked on the hazardous voyage of Social Reform, to invent the religion of Humanity as the motive for the subordination of egoism to altruism. We cannot conceal from ourselves that men apart from God are morally impotent for the highest life. The bondage of evil has to be broken ; the habit of good has to be formed. It is as true to-day as it ever was that there is no other name than Christ's in which this complete salvation is offered to men. Not only does Christ Himself present in teaching and example the Moral Ideal as no other founder of a religion has done ; but the constraining love of Christ is the moral power which all men need. No other master can inspire so passionate an affection, and so constant a devotion as He does. If this is not so evident on a comparison of the masses in Chris-

tian and heathen lands, although there is a great difference, a comparison of the saints of our own and other faiths will surely show how much more Christ is to and does for the soul that seeks sainthood.

(4) So far probably all professing the evangelical faith would agree with me. But I venture to go farther along a path where perhaps all would not follow me. But for my present purpose it is needful that I should express my deepest convictions. I myself believe that we do not preach Christ in His full significance and whole value unless we preach Christ Crucified as the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. I hold with all my heart and soul that the Gospel we should take to the ends of the earth is the Gospel of an *objective atonement for sin in His sacrifice*. Let me try to show first of all why we should preach such a Gospel, and secondly how we can preach it.

(i) We want men to become a new creation morally and spiritually in Christ

Jesus, that is we want them altogether dead to sin and wholly alive to God ; we want to evoke in them repentance and faith, the contrite heart, and the consecrated life. We must accordingly present the Cross as *God's judgment on sin as well as the forgiveness of sinners.* (a) We must make clear that it is the former in order that men may in a genuine and adequate repentance echo God's judgment on their sin. If there should be in their minds any thought that God is, or can be indifferent to the heinousness, hatefulness, and accursedness of sin, how could they themselves be as pained and grieved by their sin as a thorough turning away from it demands that they should be ? The Cross must evoke the contrite heart. A condition of moral progress is the sense of moral defect, and if we want to raise morally the races in which conscience is not sensitive, we must bring to bear upon them the strongest force which can move to so intense and sincere a penitence as will be the

beginning of a new moral life. We must preach the Cross.

(b) We must make clear also that the Cross is the forgiveness of sinners ; the love of God as well as the evil of sin must be declared. A new moral life is possible only as a new motive and a new power enter into the life : for the love of sin must be quenched as well as the power of sin broken. It is when a man learns at the Cross that God gave His Son, and that the Son gave Himself even unto death for man's salvation, that the constraining love of Christ makes him reckon himself as no longer his own, but as bought with a price, to live unto Him who so loved as to give Himself. As God's compassion awakens man's confidence, faith receptive of and responsive to grace, the divine life in the Spirit of God becomes his so as to perfect divine strength in human weakness. Both that the old things may pass away, and that all things may become new morally and spiritually, it is thus needful not only

that Christ Himself should be presented, but that He should be presented in what to Him was His baptism wherewith He had to be baptised, that His work might be accomplished, even His sacrifice for man's salvation.

(ii) It may be objected, however, that, valuable as the subjective effects in man of the preaching of the Cross may be, it is impossible for us now to hold the old view of *an objective atonement* as in any way affecting God. Now it is to be observed that there is no doctrine of the atonement that has upon it the seal of universal Christendom, but that at different periods the interpretation of the Cross has varied in accordance with the moral and religious thought prevalent. Because we cannot use the terminology of our fathers is not a reason why we should take refuge in the hopeless confession that we must affirm as a *fact* what we cannot understand as a *doctrine.* This is neither the place nor the time for a full restate-

ment of the doctrine in terms of modern thought ; but in asserting my conviction that we can and ought still to preach the objective atonement I may give a few reasons.

(a) The language of the law-court we now feel inapplicable to the relation of God to man, as the Fatherhood of God has been revealed in Christ ; and yet Fatherhood does not exclude moral character, purpose, authority, and dealing from God. Sin as an interruption of man's filial fellowship with God is not less serious in its results than could be violation of God's law. Holy love judges sin not less inexorably than righteous law ; nay, even love makes a more absolute claim than law does, and an offence against love disturbs the relation more thoroughly than a defiance of law. Husband and wife owe one another a more absolute fidelity than master and servant. In thinking of the relation of God to man as love and not law, we do not then get rid of the problem of how the

disturbance of the relation by sin can be removed.

(b) We need not, and I cannot speak of Christ as externally substituted for us, as held guilty or as punished by God instead of us. Here again love is the interpreting conception. Love is vicarious ; it means living in and for another. Christ as loving man made His own all man's life : He felt the consequences of sin for mankind even unto the desolation of death as His very own. Christ too, as loving God, made His own God's judgment on sin, His hatred of and antagonism to that in man which hinders his fellowship in trust and obedience with God ; and so the consequences of sin which in love for man He shared with man He bore in love to God as God's judgment on sin. It was in the holy heart of Jesus Christ on His Cross that God's love endured the consequences of sin and expressed its holy judgment on sin. By love to God and love to man Christ in the Cross

approved and maintained the moral order which conjoins sin and death.

(c) If it be still objected that there seems to be no necessity why God should judge sin, and in forgiving should make that judgment full and clear, all I can answer is that if my imperfect conscience condemns sin, and must condemn it, God's eternal perfection cannot do less or otherwise ; and that my conscience could not be appeased by a forgiveness which did not convey a divine judgment on the sin which I had myself humanly condemned. It is surely in this connection worth noting that sacrifice is a universal religious ordinance ; and that, gross as are the ideas connected in many religions with this institution, yet in some religions there attaches to it the significance of atonement for sin, and so it is regarded as the channel for the communication of forgiveness. Notably in the Jewish religion, not before, but after the prophetic movement, does a deepening sense of sin and God's judgment on it emphasise the

atoning character of sacrifice. Sacrifice does express a universal human necessity and aspiration. Harnack points out that where the Gospel is preached and believed sacrifice ceases. This is because the need so uttered has at last been finally and effectively met. The missionary will find in the ordinance of sacrifice a point of contact for the presentation of the Gospel. And it will be easier for him to secure belief in the atoning character of the Cross of Christ from those who have been accustomed to sacrifice in their own religion than from the modern thinker who has lost all touch with sacrifice as a religious rite. May not a sentimental view of God's Fatherhood as good-nature be largely responsible for the inability of many Christians to-day to realise the moral necessity that sin should be judged as well as forgiven, to which this universal ordinance of sacrifice bears witness? Our Gospel should offer a final and adequate solution of the problem which the position and

function of sacrifice in the religions of the world forces on our consideration.

(5) The claim of the Gospel to be preached in all the world may be reinforced by a consideration of *the end of salvation* as we now conceive it. Two modern conceptions are here relevant. (a) Faith is being more conceived as the believer's personal union with Christ, as his being crucified and risen with Christ, as his making Christ's cause his own. But this indifference to the present condition and the future prospects of heathenism which excuses itself by an illegitimate speculation, is an interruption of this loving fellowship with Him. If we are His infinite debtors—and no man has really tasted how gracious the Lord is without recognising that there ought to be no measure and no bounds to his gratitude—then we must be willing to do all we can that Jesus may see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied with the fruits of all His pains, even a world redeemed from sin

and restored unto God. He in His Word and by His Spirit is seeking to save the lost, here and now, and we withhold from Him the whole-hearted and single-minded surrender that He claims from us if we do not share His purpose. Salvation by His sacrifice is salvation into His Spirit, and His Spirit is love unto self-sacrifice. He who finds in what He is pleased to call his "advanced," "liberal" theology an escape from the call to self-sacrifice in spreading the Kingdom of Christ in the world is by the life he prefers giving the best disproof of the truth he professes. Any speculation about the condition and destiny of the heathen which is inconsistent with the doctrine and practice of the Cross may be confidently pronounced unsafe and hurtful. Only such a view is true and right as leads Christian men into fellowship with Christ's sufferings, and makes them conformable unto His death, so that by them and in them may be known the power of His resurrection.

To live the Christian life we must share the purpose, interest, and effort of Him who is our Life.

(b) There has recently come into prominence the conception of society as organic, as like a body sharing a common life. As under modern conditions humanity is becoming rapidly one society, this conception must be applied to it also. The Christian counterpart to this modern ideal (anticipated in relation to the Church by Paul) is the Kingdom of God as the world-wide sovereignty of the truth and grace of God. The individualism of the older evangelicalism is yielding to-day to a univeralism which recognises that the salvation of all is necessary to the completeness of the salvation of each. The Christendom of to-day, in as far as it has apprehended and appropriated this conception, realises that, apart from the conversion of the whole world, it cannot itself be made perfect. The life of an organism is affected adversely or favourably by its environment ; and a Chris-

tendom surrounded by paganism or heathenism cannot become fully Christian. To maintain life in fellowship with Christ, His world-wide purpose must be ours ; to realise the fulness of that life in a Christian society that purpose must find its world-wide fulfilment.

III

CHANGES OF MODERN THOUGHT AS REGARDS THEOLOGY

(1) In dealing with the Gospel in the last Lecture, some of the changes in theological thought have necessarily been noted ; but there is much in the general situation of theology to-day which has a bearing on our argument to which attention may now be directed. (a) The change of view in regard to the nature and purpose of divine revelation noted in the First Lecture, has relieved theology of the defence of many positions now untenable for modern knowledge and thought. As long as the Bible was supposed to teach authoritatively science as well as morality and religion, modern geology, biology, anthropology, and psychology were regarded

as assailing the Christian doctrine of the world and man. But since we have learned the literary character of the narratives in Genesis, we are relieved of hopeless attempts to reconcile what was assumed to be the divine revelation with human knowledge in these matters. Now we admit that the so-called science of the Bible is simply the popular knowledge of the time and the people, and no inspired communication from God, we can accept its moral and religious ministry to our higher life, and at the same time fully and freely use our minds in gaining all the knowledge which modern research and discovery have brought within our reach.

(b) There is a twofold gain for the Foreign Mission enterprise in this respect. (i) First of all the Christian message is greatly simplified when it is confined to the revelation of God's truth and grace, and the redemption of man from sin and death. Only what bears directly on these great purposes

of the sacred Scriptures need concern the Christian preacher. He need not carry with him, to Hindu, Chinaman, or Jap, popular Hebrew or Jewish ideas about the world and man. He need not substitute the Babylonian cosmology, even as purified by Hebrew faith in one God, for the cosmologies of other races. Because he can afford to ignore these questions, he can concentrate his enthusiasm and energy on the one thing needful, the relation of the Holy God to sinful man in the saving sacrifice of Christ's Cross.

(ii) *Secondly*, in the more civilised pagan lands in contact with Europe, modern science is coming to be known, and is exercising a salutary influence in making incredible to the educated, intelligent man the extravagant legends and myths of his ancestral faith. Let us realise that, even apart from Foreign Missions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism are being undermined by modern science. But that advantage would be the cause

of further difficulty if the acceptance of modern science were inconsistent with Christian faith. But it has just been shown that it need not be: for the modern Christian theologian accepts frankly and fully the results of modern science within its own sphere; and modern theology enables the Christian missionary to carry abroad a Gospel which need not fear any hindrance or loss from the spread of modern science.

(2) There is one objection to the Christian Gospel under cover, but not with the authority, of modern science. It is said that the Christian Gospel is *geocentric* and *anthropocentric*, and that, as modern astronomy, geology, biology, anthropology, etc., have dethroned man from his pre-eminence in the world, it is absurd to suppose that the Son of God can have become man and died for the salvation of mankind on earth. It is true that we know, as our fathers did not, that our earth is a very small spot on the vast expanse of space, and that the history of

man is but a brief span in the unmeasured duration of even the earth ; and that man himself has, as regards his physical frame at least, a close connection with, if not a direct descent from, the lower animals. But granted that this is so, the value of man's mental, moral, and spiritual life is by these facts in no way depreciated.

(a) It is the mind of man which has discovered the secrets of nature and history, and surveys the wonders of space and time ; and the mind that knows remains greater still than the world that is known. The science which knows its own limitations does not pretend to be able to reduce mind and life to matter and motion ; science itself has no guarantee of truth unless mind holds the clue to the labyrinth of the universe. As pragmatism has shown, science itself has been developed not merely or even mainly to satisfy man's theoretical curiosity, but rather to meet his practical necessity to be at home in the world. Idealism also has shown that the world is incon-

ceivable rationally unless as for and by Infinite and Eternal Mind, akin to the human. Eucken teaches that man himself must rise to the spiritual life before he can win a standpoint for the interpretation of the world. Philosophy thus corrects any tendency in science to depreciate mind.

(b) Righteousness is not less authoritative or imperative for the conscience because the world has for our thought grown bigger and older. Physical bulk and moral worth are incommensurable magnitudes ; and because the one has increased for our knowledge, the other need not decrease for our insight. Man's sense of sin and desire for salvation is not less real because he has discovered that there is more material reality than he believed. His dignity does not depend on the physical descent which may be assigned to him, but on the moral and spiritual ascent of which he knows himself capable. His ideals give him a significance which the material universe

can neither give nor take away. As for the Hebrew Psalmist, so for the German philosopher, the sublimity of the starry heavens without did not rob of its sublimity the moral law within. It is truly a vulgar soul which is more impressed by weight and bulk than by truth and worth. Man, even for modern knowledge and thought, is not less needy and not less worthy of the divine salvation which the Christian Gospel offers.

(c) Certainly the fresh view we get of the universe must enlarge and uplift our conception of God, and so also of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Facing so vast, ancient, and wonderful a universe, it is an audacious assertion we make, unless we have certainty to inspire our confidence, that God, the unfathomable wisdom and the immeasurable Power in, through, and over all, so loved, this world, mankind, sinning, suffering, dying, as to send in the likeness of sinful flesh His only-begotten Son, His perfect self-expression and self-communication,

His image and His agent, to taste death for every man, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life—the life of knowledge of, trust in, surrender to, and fellowship with God as the child of God. We must recognise that so stupendous a fact must have as vast an aim ; and all individualism, sectarianism, nationalism in our purpose and effort in regard to the Gospel must disappear in a universalism which can claim nothing less than the whole manhood of all mankind for the Son of God.

(3) There are two tendencies, due to the influence of idealist philosophy within theology itself in recent years, which, if they were allowed to become dominant, would adversely affect the Foreign Mission enterprise. (a) The doctrine of the *divine immanence* has been so emphasised as to involve a practical identification of God and the world, with a consequent denial of the reality of sin, and also a resulting tendency to minimise the supernatural

and the miraculous in the revelation of God and redemption of man. An application of this principle of immanence which is of special importance for Foreign Missions is the theory of a universal Christ dwelling in, and enlightening all men, based on a misunderstanding of a verse in the Fourth Gospel which Dr Moffatt rightly translates as follows: "The real Light, which enlightens every man, was coming then into the world" (i. 9). While the agency of the Logos is recognised in the Prologue to the Gospel, it teaches very distinctly that the Christ as the Word become flesh entered into the world at a definite moment in human history. As we shall show in the Fourth Lecture, we can, nay, must believe that God has not left Himself without witness in any land or age, but has been present enlightening and renewing the souls of men in some measure. But this is something different from this theory, which suggests that men by nature have in their inner life a revelation

of God comparable with that given in Jesus Christ. This doctrine of the universal Christ can be so presented as to encourage the assumption that the historical Jesus, who lives on and works in the living Christ, is not so necessary for the higher life of man as Christian faith assumes. From theory we can appeal to fact. When there are produced positive evidences in the religious life of mankind of ideas and ideals, aspirations and achievements, which can claim equal value with those directly traceable to Him whom Christian faith confesses Saviour and Lord, we shall admit that the universal Christ of this theory suffices for man's need

Closely connected with this tendency is the tendency to a vain *optimism*, which minimises the evil in the world, and assumes that by a natural evolution, a slow and steady human progress, what evil there is will yield to the final and universal good. Pantheism is, and must be, optimism, because if God is all, all

must be for the best. These tendencies do not go to this extreme, but it is their direction.

(b) Over against both we must place Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God, a conception of which most fruitful use has been made in recent years in relation to the Foreign Mission enterprise in Hogg's book, *Christ's Message of the Kingdom.* Jesus was not content with the present order of the world or the present course of history as the manifestation of God : He did not expect that by an ordinary process the present of man's sin would bring forth the future of God's will. Over against the sin and evil of man and his world He placed this Kingdom of God, which He did not regard with the poet as "the far-off, divine event, to which the whole Creation moves," but as an already present, perfect, transcendent reality, which would come to earth by God's act of grace as soon as, but no sooner than man had the faith to receive it.

(c) It seems to me that the Christian

Church to-day must make its choice between the two tendencies which have been mentioned and the Message of Jesus regarding the Kingdom of God. If this *immanentism* and *optimism*, tending towards pantheism, is right, then Jesus was a fanatical visionary. But if we still hold that He the Son knew the Father, and could make the Father known, while we recognise the necessarily figurative character of all prophetic language, as His in this connection inevitably was, we must insist that the truth so embodied is that the world is not as it ought to be, or God means it to be ; that it can be brought into accord with God's will only by God's act, His grace responsive to man's faith, and that God's action is not " cribb'd, cabin'd, and confined " by a natural evolution, but may work marvels of moral and spiritual change even in our own day, if we will but believe.

(d) This message of the Kingdom, if we accept it as authoritative, will deepen

our sense of the world's evil, and strengthen our hope of the world's good. It is assuredly the attitude which is most favourable to zeal, devotion, and service in the Foreign Mission enterprise. If we are not convinced of the necessity of the Gospel for the whole world, we shall not feel the urgency of the call to carry it to the ends of the earth. If we are not assured of the certainty that the Kingdom of God is coming on earth, and it may be more speedily than we usually think, we shall lack the constancy and courage to go on in spite of difficulties and disappointments. If, relying on the words of Jesus, we believe, confidently and expectantly, that, according to our faith, so shall it be unto us in respect of the coming of the Kingdom, that our human activity is being reinforced by the divine action, that we are not limited to the finite resources of man in wisdom, grace, service, but have at our disposal the infinite resources of God, we shall not be discouraged by calculations as to the

length of time which must elapse before the conversion of the world is accomplished at the present rate of progress; we shall not make the mistake of supposing that our feverish energy abroad to overtake a task manifestly too great for us can compensate for calm dependence on God at home, that He with Whom all things are possible may give us the enabling grace to do His work. We need not superstitiously look for miracles in the outward realm, but we may in faith await swifter and greater changes in the moral and spiritual realm than the current belief in a merely natural evolution would warrant. Surely Bergson's theory of a creative evolution, and Eucken's doctrine of the subordination of the natural to the spiritual life, in which alone we find God, point in the same direction as the Christian faith, which lays hold on the promise and the expectation of Jesus regarding the Kingdom of God. Without being out-of-date, while not fol-

lowing merely the fashion of an hour, Christian theology to-day warrants the hope, without which Foreign Missions would be a crushing burden, that, far beyond our expectations, but according to our confidence in, and submission to God, He Himself will bring His Kingdom to earth.

(4) In dealing in the preceding paragraph with Jesus' view of the Kingdom, we had to distinguish in His teaching the kernel and the husk, the divine truth and the human forms of speech in which it was necessarily conveyed.

This confronts us with another objection to Foreign Missions which modern thought professes to find in the character of Christian theology. Scholarship has in recent years been giving a great deal of attention to the temporary and local conditions amid which the Christian religion had its origin and development. The influence of the environment, first Jewish, then Gentile, on the organism of early Christian thought and life has been

so emphasised as to depreciate the unique vitality of that faith in resisting, transcending, or modifying its environment.

(a) Jesus is made so completely a man of His own age and people, as to hide the Christ for all men, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But this reduction of Jesus to a Jew, a little wiser and better than His fellow-countrymen, leaves the origin of Christianity altogether unexplained. How did the most exclusive religion beget the most universal in its character, mission, and history? How did the Roman Empire after three centuries welcome the faith sprung from the Judaism it had despised and hated, and by which it had been influenced in a very slight degree? The Personality who made the change was greater than His inheritance or environment. But when we subject that Personality to a still closer scrutiny, we are impressed with the permanent significance and the universal value of His teaching and example, life and work.

This is the issue in the controversy between Protestant Liberalism and Roman Catholic Modernism as represented by Harnack and Loisy. The latter emphasises the local and temporal form of the mission and message of Jesus: he leaves so small a germ of the original teaching and influence of Jesus that the subsequent development in Roman Catholicism becomes a historical necessity for its distinctiveness and efficiency as a religion and morality, and thus he offers a justification for all included in that development, while affording us no criterion of its value and validity. The former, however negative his attitude to miracles, and constant his avoidance of metaphysics, does give us a Jesus, if not adequate as the object of Christian faith, yet qualified for the religious and moral leadership of mankind. The Fatherhood of God, the infinite worth of each human soul, the forgiveness of sin, the command of love, and the better righteousness its observance secures, the

Kingdom of God, the atoning worth of Jesus' death, the certainty of His victory over death, and His continued presence as Lord for His community—these are the abiding elements of worth Harnack acknowledges in the Gospel of Jesus. Even if this were all, and it is not all that the testimony of the Gospels, and the self-witness of Jesus in them, affords, here would be a world-wide message of truth and grace.

(b) It has sometimes been maintained that the teaching of Jesus might have founded a Jewish sect, but that the work of Paul was necessary to make Christianity a universal religion. Paul would have been the first to reject with abhorrence this exaltation of the servant above the Lord. But apart from this exaggeration, we must recognise that next to Jesus, but always and only as dependent on, and interpretive of the living Christ of his faith, Paul has done most to make our religion what it is. Accordingly, much is made of Paul's Jewish inheritance and

his Gentile environment as determining his theology. One need not deny the reality of these influences, although one may be convinced that the extent has been greatly exaggerated by many scholars anxious to trace every idea and every phase of Paul's to some Jewish or Gentile source. But what remains inexplicable is the experience of Paul, the transformation of the persecutor into the preacher and interpreter of the Christian faith. In Paul's argument in Romans the Jewish rabbi may betray himself again and again; but the Christian Apostle who there bears witness to his faith is immeasurably more and greater morally and religiously than rabbinism ever made any man. The Pauline experience of sin and grace, sacrifice and salvation, justification by faith, sanctification in love, inspiration by hope, personal union with Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, has been repeated again and again, and so proves its permanent value and universal validity.

(c) Glancing at the subsequent history

of the Christian faith, we may observe that it was able to secure the allegiance of Gentiles as well as Jews throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire, and to express its thought and life through the philosophical genius of Greece, and the practical ethos of Rome. That it lost much in this adaptation may be freely and frankly conceded; but amid all modifications and even corruptions it did preserve its identity in Christian piety, if not always in theology, polity, or ritual. At the fall of the Roman Empire it was able to gain, if often in only too external a fashion, the acceptance of the nations which rose after Rome fell, and to civilise, moralise, and even in some measure Christianise these very varied races. We have to remind ourselves that it was once an alien to our people, and only slowly has it come to be at home in our land. It has transformed our racial characteristics, and has determined our national development.

(d) At the Reformation there was an

attempt to recover the religion of the New Testament. That recovery was incomplete, not only in Luther, who was willing to retain whatever in Roman Catholicism did not directly contradict his fresh experience of the grace of God in Christ, but even in Calvin, who tried to reconstitute Christianity according to the pattern given in the Holy Scriptures ; for even he was a man of his own time and surroundings, and he could not, and no man could, altogether undo the past. Such a complete recovery, even if possible, would not have been desirable, for the conditions of the first century in Palestine were so unlike the circumstances of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe that no mere repetition could fulfil God's advancing purpose. After the Reformation came a period of Protestant scholasticism, when the new life came to be more and more imprisoned in rigid creeds, codes, polities, and rituals, which claiming permanent value and universal validity, bore very distinctly

the marks of their own time and place.

(e) But, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the whole tendency of Christian thought and life has been increasingly to distinguish the kernel and the husk in our religion, to detach the one and same Christian faith of all the generations since its birth from all these limitations. Harnack's saying that the history of dogma is also its judgment is worth quoting in full. "The history of dogma, while exhibiting the process of the origin and development of dogma, yields the most appropriate means to free the Church from dogmatic Christianity, and to hasten the unceasing process of emancipation which began with Augustine. But it also bears witness to the *unity* of the Christian faith in the course of its history, in so far as it proves that certain fundamental ideas of the Gospel have never been lost, and have bidden defiance to all assaults" (*Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 5). This applies not

to dogma only, but to all other forms of embodiment of Christian thought and life.

(5) The movement towards Christian unity, now being powerfully influenced by recognition of the fact that a divided Christendom is unequal to its worldwide task, is a proof that men are moving more and more from the circumference of creed, code, ritual, polity, on which they differ, to the centre of Christian faith, hope, love, in which they are one in the one Saviour and Lord. Christian scholarship, which can exhibit the process by which, and the reasons for which these divergent forms of thought and life have been assumed, and can also detach the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the local and temporal forms in which even the New Testament presents it to us, is probably the most potent ally that this movement has. So far from the *odium theologicum* being characteristic of this modern scholarship, it is making steadily and strongly for mutual understanding, tolerance, and even harmony. We are

taking seriously the saying *Pectus facit theologum*, the heart makes the theologian, or experience makes doctrine, and that principle makes for Christian charity and even unity. We may not yet be in the position to define the essence of Christianity, which is one in all lands and the same in all ages ; and it may be we never shall be able to do this, as the essence may always and everywhere need some local habitation and some temporal name, for its full effect in thought and life ; but we are nearer than any age has been in apprehending what the permanent and universal Christianity is.

(6) The present theological situation in this respect is full of promise for the mission enterprise. It does condemn any attempt to take our ecclesiastical fashions and theological dialects to India and China, with their own cultures and civilisations, which may with equal right supply the forms for Christian thought and life in these lands, although how far such an adaptation is necessary and

desirable is a subject deserving serious consideration, which I shall endeavour to give to it in the Fifth Lecture. Further, the situation to-day does prove the claim of Christianity to be the final and universal religion, because so adaptable as regards its local and temporal phases to different races at various stages of their development. Were Christianity as rigid in doctrine and practice as Islam aims at being, were it so bound up with the mental and moral tendencies of a race as Buddhism is, were it as conservative of ancestral custom and as concerned about ceremonial usage as Confucianism is, were it even bound by Mosaic law or Catholic tradition and practice (Roman, Greek, or Anglican), it could not be the religion for mankind. But theology to-day gives to Christ as Son of God and Son of Man, as Saviour and Lord, a place in Christian thought and life which more thoroughly fits Christianity for its world-wide mission than the elaborate doctrinal systems and

the rigid ecclesiastical polities did. With simplicity Christian faith has gained adaptability to the distinctive capacity and character of each people, and in it Christ's eternal grace meets man's essential need.

IV

CHANGES OF MODERN THOUGHT AS REGARDS OTHER RELIGIONS

(1) In recent years the comparative study of religions has been attracting an increasing attention. Not only have attempts been made to estimate what modifications in Christian theology this science has a right to demand, but the contention has been advanced that under its influence the motive, the message, and the method of Foreign Missions shall be changed. There can be little doubt that in the present situation this study will prove either a friend or a foe to Christian theology and Foreign Missions. (a) On the one hand, it is maintained that Christian theology must abate its pretensions of a special revelation of God in the Hebrew nation and

the Christian Church, and of the absolute superiority of Jesus Christ to all other masters of the souls of men; and on the other it is asserted that there is much in the history and doctrine of the Christian Church which has its counterpart in other religions, and may even be derived from these. In the "religious-historical" method of study which now prevails in Germany, comparison with other religions is an essential factor, and even, where possible, correlation, that is, the derivation of features of the Christian religion from other religions.

(b) The movement is not confined to scholars. There are a few missionaries, who have been so affected by this spirit of the age, that they seek to emphasise the elements which appear common to the Christian religion and the religions with which in their work they are brought into contact, and to minimise the distinctive features of Christianity. Thus the Christian Gospel is to be adapted to

the mystical, passive, pantheistic type of Hindu piety; the moral contrast between God and man, which the Gospel asserts in its teaching about sin, guilt, forgiveness, renewal, is to be concealed behind the metaphysical unity of the divine and the human which Hindu speculation affirms.

(c) In this tendency, theoretical and practical, there is, I am confident, a very serious problem as well as very grave peril facing the Christian Church in its belief and work; and in this Lecture I shall attempt to meet the demands of the present situation by determining as accurately as possible what inevitable results for Christian theology, and thus for Foreign Missions this comparative study of religions involves. This statement is offered in the expectation that in the long run this study will prove a friend and not a foe, that gain and not loss will be the result of learning all that the study of other religions can teach us regarding man's religious nature and

development, and discovering wherein Christianity agrees with, or differs from, other religions.

(2) Some general conclusions from this study may be offered. (a) First of all we learn that man is by his nature religious. Wherever there is any human society, there are common beliefs and rites which may be described as religious. The assertion which used to be made that there were tribes which were altogether atheistic is now quite disproved. The conception of the divine may be very gross, and the worship offered very rude, but even in the lowest stages of barbarism there is some recognition of superhuman powers, and of man's dependence on them, and some effort to avert their wrath or to secure their favour. Religion is regarded, not as a private concern, but as a public interest, and the tribal bond is a religious tie.

(b) Secondly, man's religious nature is expressed and exercised in similar

ways : the differences are due to climate, economic, racial, social, conditions, but it is the same manhood which manifests itself in prayer and sacrifice, creed and code. So striking are the resemblances in beliefs and rites in the religions of different tribes or nations, far removed from one another, that it has been assumed that at some time in the distant past there must have been some direct connection. The lost Ten Tribes have been discovered by some writers wherever any features of the Jewish ritual have been detected. Such an assumption is, however, quite gratuitous. The touch of nature which makes the whole world kin is a sufficient explanation of many of these features.

(c) Thirdly, not only does religion develop with man's evolution from barbarism to civilisation, but with subordinate variations, essentially the same stages are passed through in the development. While dogmatism in describing this development in detail is to be care-

fully avoided; while degradation as well as progress must be recognised as an aspect of human evolution ; while, owing to special conditions, one nation may quickly pass through a stage in which another lingers long, yet there is a movement upward from animism through polydæmonism and polytheism to a monism, which generally has issued in pantheism, and in the Hebrew nation alone in monotheism.

(d) Fourthly, the lower stages of religion may be distinguished as *natural* from the higher as *moral*. In the lower stages morality is divorced from religion, and the goods the worshippers seek from their gods are *natural*—food, clothing, health, safety. In the higher stages not only are the gods themselves invested with *moral* character, but they are conceived as guardians of the *moral* order, for tribal custom is enforced by divine sanction. This conception remains often in a very rudimentary form.

(e) Fifthly, the advance in religion is

sometimes, if not always, connected with some conspicuous and influential religious personality, as, for instance, Confucius in China, Zoroaster in Persia, Moses in Israel. The moral order in each of the cases mentioned is bound up with the life of a people, and thus these religions are *national.* A further advance is made when the founder of the religion seeks to invest it with a *universal* character, and so to impose upon it a *missionary* obligation. Buddhism, Christianity, Islam are the three universal missionary religions. If the destiny of mankind is that national distinctions should be superseded by the unity of humanity, then the *national* religions cannot supply the religion of the future. The claim of the three universal missionary religions alone would appear to need further investigation, did not a formidable rival of the three present itself in the religion of India, Hinduism. While, on the one hand, in its speculation it has reached pantheism, yet in its practical, popular

forms it has not fully emerged from the *natural* into the *moral* stage. It has not among all the founders of its numerous sects any sufficiently commanding religious personality to bring about its thorough reformation, its genuine progress. Whether Christian theology should allow itself to be influenced by Hindu pantheism or not, and whether Christian piety can learn something from Indian mysticism or not are questions demanding later investigation. It is certain, however, that the polytheism of the common religion can put forward no claim to diffusion or permanence. These general conclusions seem to simplify our problem. Christianity need not be compared with any and every religion. We need to concern ourselves only with these highest stages in the religious evolution of humanity.

(3) Certain dubious inferences have been drawn from the comparative study of religions adverse to the claim Christianity makes which must be examined before we enter on the comparison of it

with its rivals. It is asserted that no special revelation of God to the Hebrew nation, culminating in Christ, can be recognised. This objection has already been dealt with in the First Lecture setting forth the present argument for the permanent and universal value of the Bible. Next, the absoluteness of the Christian religion is denied, and it is maintained that the religion of the future must be an amalgam of the best and truest in all religions.

How far, if at all, is this contention valid ?

(a) The comparative study of the religions of the world does, undoubtedly, forbid the arrogant assumption which was formerly made, that all the religions of mankind are false, and Christianity alone true. It is incredible that all this search of man after God has been vain, and that God has not been found by any of these seekers. God is with all who seek Him. This study has taught us the inadequacy of Kant's analysis of human

knowledge. Reason is in man *spiritual* as well as *pure* (theoretical) and *practical* (moral). Man not only apprehends a categorical imperative beyond phenomena but also a divine personality. This is the testimony of the most influential German thinker of to-day, Eucken, with his doctrine of the spiritual life as the approach to God. As man's practical reason in the lower stages of its development apprehends the categorical imperative imperfectly, so does his spiritual reason the divine personality ; but in each case the apprehension is real—if imperfect.

(b) In the realm of religion there is not only human discovery but also divine disclosure. I learned from my revered teacher Dr Fairbairn to believe that wherever there is sincere human religion there is real divine revelation. Troeltsch, one of the most ardent advocates of the "religious-historical" method, recognises that "in the leading personalities of religious history there is a last fact akin, and yet unlike, to moral judgment and

æsthetic taste, a life of the soul, which reveals the independence, the inner unity, and the originality of religion," and which consists of "the original, actual, repeatedly experienced contact with God." There is a great deal of religion, even within Christendom, which is traditional and customary, mediated by the religious society, and of this it may not be possible to affirm that it necessarily involves any revelation. But wherever religion is sincere, original, intense, there is this contact of man with God. In this mutual communion it is incredible that God should be passive, and man alone active. God makes Himself known when He is known by man. The comparative study of religions instead of disproving, confirms the fact of divine revelation. Religion is too universal and permanent a reality in human history to be treated as an illusion, or even as an aspiration which has no certainty of satisfaction. Our theory of knowledge must be enlarged to make room for that knowledge of

the divine which is claimed in all religions.

(c) This universal revelation does not exclude the special revelation which is claimed for Christianity. In addition to what has already been advanced in the First Lecture, some more general considerations may be offered here. While in the physical region regularity and uniformity reign, in the realm of human history there is abundant variety. Races differ not only in bodily features, but even in mental, moral, and spiritual characteristics. The functions discharged by various peoples differ. The principle of divine selection is discernible in the providence of God over the affairs of men. It is vain to dispute regarding the kind and the degree of the inspiration of great religious personalities. It is imperative to recognise the difference in moral value of these personalities to mankind. If it can be shown, as has already been partly done, that Christ excels all other masters of the soul of

man, then it may be maintained that there is a special revelation of God to man in Him. As religion implies revelation, and man's activity reveals God's action, where religion is at its highest revelation is at its fullest. Nor need we suppose that God is limited by man, and must wait the favourable human condition for the fuller divine activities. A Semitic genius for religion does not explain the ethical monotheism of the Hebrew prophets. Heredity and environment, and all other factors of human development, do not explain the Personality of Jesus Christ, as the recognition of the unique, divine Incarnation does. When there is the clearest vision of God and the closest communion with Him, then we may hold God has willed to show Himself most fully and give Himself most freely beyond the bounds of the only natural and the merely human.

(d) This contention might be admitted by some, and yet it might be objected that the superiority is only a relative,

and not an absolute one, one only of degree and not of kind. Granted even that the Christian religion is the best, it is only a good deal better than the others, and it must not be placed in a class by itself. There is nothing that is so marked in the fleeting fashions of the thought of to-day as this endeavour to reduce all qualitative distinctions to quantitative. The difference of mind in man and the ape is only one of degree, it is argued. But the ape still leaps from branch to branch, cracking his nuts in his teeth. Man has developed in material civilisation, mental culture, moral character, religious aspiration. The difference has surely proved itself to be in kind, and not in degree only, as Wallace recognised. If Jesus has given to mankind a conception of God which witnesses its own truth to reason and conscience, and a certainty of the truth of that conception which meets the doubts of the human mind ; if He has in His character revealed a human per-

fection which men feel it is their highest moral calling to imitate, and yet which, as they strive to imitate, they find to be more and more imimitable ; if in His work as Saviour and Lord He evokes man's penitence, conveys God's pardon, inspires with the purpose of holiness, and sustains by the promise of glory and blessedness in the eternal life in God—then He is and does for men what no other master has been and done, and the difference between Him and them is so great that it is no longer one of degree, but of kind.

(e) But even then some would still contend that we must not speak of Christianity as the *absolute* religion. It is only the best that has so far appeared : a better may yet come to mankind. It may be the best at present conceivable by us, but we must not limit possibility by our minds. (i) In the first place, is not this a rather futile procedure ? What we are called to judge is the actual, and not the possible, and what

we can use in our judgment is our own mind and not some other. In our world, for our minds Christianity is the best religion, and by so far the best that we are led to judge that it differs, not only in degree, but even in kind, from other religions. If we can say so much are we not entitled to call it the *absolute* religion ?

(ii) But, secondly, I venture to go even further than this. The certainty with which Christ affirms that the Son reveals the Father, and the consistency of His life with the claim, the confidence with which He offers Himself to man as Saviour and Lord, and the security and satisfaction which are experienced by those who put their trust in Him, have nothing relative, tentative, provisional in them. The ultimate reality is not inscrutable mystery, but Father ; in Christ's salvation the eternal God is man's refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. We affirm the absoluteness of Christ's security when we say

with the Apostle, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He can keep that which I have committed to Him." If the affirmation be false, then is our Christian experience illusive, the assurance of our faith vain.

(iii) Lastly, even if a better religion were in the future conceivable, we should best prepare men for its advent by winning their allegiance to the religion which is now best.

(f) If Christianity be so supreme among the religions of the world that we may distinguish it in kind, and not merely in degree, from the others, that we may describe it as the absolute religion, then it follows inevitably that we must anticipate that it will be the religion of the future. (i) In that religion the pantheism of India and the deism of Islam will not form a new theistic compound with the monotheism of Jesus, for it already recognises the immance of the one and the transcendence of the other, and contributes the Divine Fatherhood

as the light of all men's seeing. The moral indifference of Hinduism, the pessimistic monasticism of Buddhism, the eudæmonistic legalism of Mohammedanism, and the conservative moralism of Confucianism, will not be blended with the teaching and example of Jesus in the ideal which will guide the onward steps of mankind. Is it conceivable that the heart-broken and contrite because of sin will find any other balm than the forgiveness which in love unto self-sacrifice Christ conveys from God to man?

(ii) When men talk vaguely in generalities about the religion of the future combining what is best and truest in all the religions of the world, one cannot but wish that they would condescend to particulars. What is it that these religions will contribute in addition to or in correction of Christ's revelation of the reality of God, His realisation of the ideal of man, His redemption of men from sin to God? We may confidently

expect that men in all lands will find the verification of their truest thoughts and the satisfaction of their holiest aspirations in Christ, and that thus the religions of the world may prove themselves tutors that lead to Him.

(iii) We may be sure, too, that there is not a little in the creeds and codes, rituals and polities of Western Christendom which, as alien to its genius and spirit, the East will reject, and that the Eastern mind and soul will discover and develop elements in the truth and grace of Jesus which have hithreto been an undiscovered treasure. It would be a racial arrogance foreign to the Christian temper for the European peoples to try and impose their religious and moral type on Asia. All that is local and temporal in our Christianity must be freely surrendered ; but Christ Himself is not a vague abstraction, which each race can clothe in its own vesture of thought and life. He is a concrete reality in His truth and grace, and nothing less and else

than He must be offered to the world by the Christian Church.

(iv) There is a definite conception of God, a distinct standard for man, a particular offer of salvation from God to man in Christ, which cannot be changed to suit the prejudices of any race. Indian thought needs correction, and Chinese morality needs expansion and elevation from Christ. The moral indifference of Hinduism does not prove that man does not need the salvation from sin Christ offers. The pessimistic monasticism of Buddhism does not show that man should not seek life, life more abundant, life eternal. The conservative formalism of Confucianism does not rightly forbid the hope of human progress. The Christian Church must take heed lest a spurious tolerance should lead it to mutilate and depotentiate its Gospel, so that it would cease to be the power and wisdom of God unto salvation to all who believe.

(4) In the previous argument Christi-

anity has been compared with other religions, but we may bring the discussion to a conclusion by looking more closely at its two rivals as missionary and universal religions, to discover whether their character does correspond with their pretensions, as is the case with Christianity.

(a) Buddhism assumes that existence itself is evil, and that salvation consists in escape from the consciousness of existence ; it is pessimistic. Monasticism is its method of saving men. In its original form it cannot be the religion of a progressive society. All mankind will not be won for this retirement from the world, and renunciation of the desire to live.

(b) It is an historic fact that Islam borrowed its theology from a debased Judaism and Christianity ; the conception of God is deistic and fatalistic, and cannot be regarded as an advance on the Christian or the Jewish, but must be judged as a degradation. The rules of life the

prophet imposed on his followers bind his community to the customs of Arab society in his own age. Polygamy and slavery are embedded in his social order. It may seem a moral and religious advance among races which it raises from barbarism ; but there even it bars the way to the acceptance of Christianity. And it has not shown itself fit to be the spiritual guard and guide of an advancing civilised society.

(c) Christianity, on the other hand, expects a Kingdom of God on earth ; it is not pessimistic, but optimistic. If the first generation anticipated the end of the present order in the Second Advent of Christ, the teaching of Jesus itself presents a wider horizon and a larger prospect ; it contains principles of progress, whatever Jesus' own anticipations were. And Christianity has shown itself progressive in its history, adaptable to new conditions of thought and life. While Christ demands self-denial in the interests of the Kingdom of God, monasticism was a

foreign importation into Christianity, and Luther was a true exponent of the Christian spirit when he insisted on the fulfilment of the earthly calling as one of the conditions of Christian perfection. Christ laid down principles in concrete illustrations, but He did not attempt to regulate the details of the life of the community ; and thus His society is not fixed to the manners or morals of any land in any age. Polygamy Christianity never tolerated; slavery it did not at once abolish, but its principles tended to abolition. Its teaching about divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood raised it at its very beginning above racial peculiarities and national limitations. In its spread it has shown itself capable of manifold development in its changing environments, and it has thus proved universal in its character, as its rivals have not.

(d) But we have not yet got to the heart of the matter. Christianity is Christ, and how does He compare with Mohammed or Buddha ?

As Regards other Religions

(i) Buddha claimed to be the teacher of the way of salvation, but not himself the Saviour, as Christ proves Himself to be. Mohammed declared himself to be the prophet of Allah, but Christ as the Son has not only revealed God's Fatherhood, but also has made men in reality the children of God. In Him there is no pessimism, as in Buddha, or fatalism, as in Mohammed ; but the proof in His absolute faith in God's love of a universal beneficence which sends sunshine and shower on all, and an individual interest which numbers even the hairs of the head.

(ii) His moral character corresponded with His religious consciousness, for He is supreme in morals as in piety. Mohammed, even taken at his best, cannot for a moment sustain comparison with Him. Even Gautama, or the Buddha, who is a far nobler, more heroic, and self-sacrificing personality than Mohammed, shows limitations in his intentions, and imperfections in his methods, which prove him immeasurably inferior

to Jesus. If he gave up home and rank to become a homeless beggar, he did not love to the uttermost of self-sacrifice in death.

(iii) What most of all distinguishes Jesus from these other masters is His mediatorial function, His sacrificial salvation. Neither of these teachers offered himself to men as Saviour, or has proved himself able, as Christ has, to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him. Buddhism has deified its founder in its later form, the Mahayana, contrary to his intentions, and appeals to him for help. But we still wait for an authentic instance of an original, and not imitative Buddhist experience which can compare with Paul's being crucified and risen with Christ. Is Mohammed the intimate companion, the availing comforter, the mighty deliverer of the pious Moslem as Christ is of the Christian? These questions carry their own answer. Jesus has brought God to man in His life, death, and resurrection, and brings

man to God in penitence, faith, love, hope, through His grace, as no other master has done, or can. Hence His name is above every other name, for in that name is salvation. The comparative study of religions has not dethroned Him from that Sovereignty of Saviourhood which Foreign Missions seek to make actual unto earth's remotest bound.

V

CHANGES OF MODERN THOUGHT AS REGARDS THE PURPOSE AND METHOD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

(1) While the varied changes which have been passed in review have not barred the claim of Christianity to be the faith of the whole world, nor lessened the duty of the Christian Church to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth, they have necessarily affected the views held of the purpose and method of Foreign Missions ; and to these changes we must now address ourselves. (a) Just as at home, so abroad also, the emphasis falls less entirely than it formerly did on the individual, and is being more laid upon the society. We are recognising that the individual does not, and cannot be

considered by himself, as his inheritance, physical or social, from the past, as well as his present environment, is a potent factor in making him what he is. We must in dealing with any man in the interests of morality or religion take due account of his evil or good entail, his helpful or hurtful surroundings.

(b) Accordingly the purpose of Foreign Missions is seen to be not the snatching of a few brands from the burning, but the Christianising of the civilisation, culture, morals, and manners of whole nations. Industry must be substituted for war as the dominant interest of savage peoples. Education must lay hold of the young so that the Christian influences may mould the conscience and character when the personality is most flexible. Prejudice and hostility must be overcome by philanthropy, the outer boons of the Gospel must prepare a welcome for its inner blessings. Medical relief is a necessary auxiliary of evangelical appeal.

(c) It is true that this argument is sometimes carried too far. Social amelioration cannot be substituted, either at home or abroad, for individual conversion. India cannot be Christianised unless we make each Hindu a Christian. Mass movements, while they make the change from heathendom to Christianity easier for the individual, always involve the risk that the alteration as a whole will be superficial. It might be a question of temporary tactics whether a missionary should devote his energy to getting such an influence over a whole society as to prepare gradually for a general Christian confession rather than to securing immediately individual conversions ; but it can never be the resolve of permanent policy to allow individual conversion to fall into the background in the missionary outlook. The condition of Christendom to-day in Europe is a warning against the attempt to make nations as a whole Christian without making sure that the men and women composing them are

fully and thoroughly converted. When Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to the leaven which changes the lump He does justify the endeavour to make Christianity a pervasive influence in any human society ; and it is not loss but gain that this aspect of mission work is to-day receiving fuller recognition than ever before.

(2) The comparative study of religions is combining with the practical experience of the mission-field in demanding that the missionary shall approach any religion with which he comes into contact, not intolerantly but sympathetically. For we cannot now think that our own religion is alone altogether true and that all other religions are wholly false. (a) As in the teaching and training of youth points of contact in belief, rite, custom, necessity, or aspiration between our Christian faith and other religions must be diligently sought after, and so the lines of least resistance for approach and appeal must be dis-

covered. A loving insight into the religion of others will disclose needs unmet which Christ can meet, and no less a religious nature which can become aware of its deepest needs only as the satisfaction which Christ offers comes to be known. A few instances must suffice. The animist in his hope of help from the spirits he worships, or fear of ill from the demons he propitiates, needs, and will in due time welcome the assurance of the providence of the Heavenly Father. His dread of ghosts can be relieved by the Christian hope of immortality. The need of a personal God, of a God who comes down to man as man, of a personal relation of devotion in the worshipper, which the Hindu sects seek in various ways to meet, may be regarded as a preparation for the human faith which claims the divine grace in Jesus Christ, the Word of God become flesh. The change from the Hinayana, or Small Vehicle, to the Mahayana, or Great Vehicle of Buddhism

is profoundly significant as an indication of the necessities and aspirations of the soul of man which the religion in its earlier form failed, and in its later form tried to satisfy. The modifications of Islam in Persia towards pantheism and mysticism, to a belief in Incarnation and Atonement of a sort, show that Mohammed cannot satisfy.

(b) To the Christian missionary the study of the history of the religion with which he is dealing, and especially of its sects, is most instructive and inspiring, for it will show him both wherein lies its insufficiency, and what are the wants and wishes of the human spirit which it has tried, but failed fully and abidingly to meet, and so will enable him to find in Christ's Gospel what will satisfy his hearers. This confidence he can cherish, for the comparative study of religions shows a fundamental unity of religion under all the superficial differences of the religions. The object of faith and worship is always the Divine, however

variously conceived; the subject of religion is the soul of man with its practical necessities, however diversely realised; the modes of worship are prayer and sacrifice under whatever forms they may present themselves; for all mankind shares a common manhood. It is possible to give an account of the nature, purpose, origin, and factors of religion as such, which will afford a means of better understanding the religions. Hence, if the missionary is to study the religion with which he has to do effectively, he should be familiar with the psychology of religion, with all the light it throws on what religion is in and does for man.

(c) The attitude of intelligent tolerance must be maintained even when it is most difficult. (i) There are religious superstitions and moral corruptions which may appear as evil only, and as evidence of human depravity, for which there must be condemnation, and condemnation only. Many a missionary

has stirred an audience at home by vivid tales of lust and cruelty; and speaker and hearers alike were right in desiring that as speedily as can be these things should cease to be. But we must beware of holding the doers of such abominations as guilty in the same degree as those who defy and disobey the Christian standards which they know. If the heathen were at heart as bad as their lives seems to us, the missionary enterprise would be far less hopeful than it is. The stock argument of street-corner, free-thinking orators used to be the moral depravity shown by the Chosen People or individual saints in the Old Testament; and the Christian apologist now meets that objection by insisting that the human development, and also the divine revelation in and through it were progressive; and that the moral or religious defects of a lower stage do not lessen the claim of Christ, in Whom this progress found its consummation. We

must deal as justly with other religions as with the historical antecedents of our own.

(ii) The history of a religion will often reveal to us the cause of and reason for a belief or a custom which seems to us blameworthy. At a time when every stranger was a foe, slavery was the milder and more merciful alternative to extermination. Polygamy finds its explanation in economic and social conditions. With the abounding prostitution of our great cities, and the constant conflicts of capital and labour in Christendom, we must be careful how we bring polygamy or slavery as a deadly reproach against less advanced civilisations, however much we may seek to bring our own nation, and all other nations, up to the highest ideal of Christian purity and liberty. We must not pronounce Mohammed an impostor because he did not abolish polygamy and slavery ; but we may argue that it is a defect in Islam that the founder's

minute regulations of the life of his religious community has so bound his religion in the fetters of local and temporary customs that these cannot be broken without a breach with the religion itself. While seeking to lead to a higher stage in manners, morals, and worship, the missionary must not condemn all that belongs to the lower stage as evidence of the deliberate wickedness of those whom he is seeking to win for the Christian faith. No one who knows the history of mankind would deny that there has been retrogression and stagnation as well as progress; that in heathendom as in Christendom there has been abounding sin, a refusal to walk in the light which is already possessed; but what we must be on our guard against is the condemnation of everything which from our Christian standpoint appears evil as proof of the desperate wickedness of the human heart. We must be tolerant as well as sympathetic if we are to find the open

road for Christ into the soul of man.

(d) Such tolerance and sympathy do not exclude judgment of the defects of other religions, and even the frank and full expression of that judgment before the adherents of any religion as a reason for its abandonment. But there are certain principles which should be followed. (i) We must carefully distinguish the degree in which any religion is responsible for moral or social evils. We should protest against a condemnation of the Christian faith because of the impurity, intemperance, and inhumanity which are still found in Christendom. The missionary in the East does not want his faith judged by the policy of the Christian Powers in Asia. There are evils for which a religion is directly responsible. The conception of the gods in Hinduism is the source of much of its moral pollution ; only if the deity be conceived as lust can prostitution be accepted as an attendant of

divine worship. There are other evils which a religion has not the moral insight to condemn. Mohammed's acquiescence in, and regulation of polygamy and slavery show the defect of his conscience in comparison with the moral vision of Christ. There are evils which the moral code of a religion may condemn, but which it does not exercise sufficient moral influence to restrain: here we must be careful not to judge a religion for the defects of those who merely make an outward profession of it, as so many in Christendom do. We can justly judge it only by the restraint or constraint it exercises morally on those who are regarded as genuinely pious. If moral character is not required as a proof of religious devoutness, as in Hinduism, we may condemn it as morally defective.

(ii) Again, the morality of a religion may perpetuate a lower stage of social development; and the conservative creed may sanction what the progressive conscience condemns. This process is

going on in India at the present moment. Neo-Hinduism is making an endeavour to get rid of customs which the popular religion sanctions and approves. With the spread of culture and civilisation the moral development of the nations will be stimulated, and a stage will be reached when the adherents of each of these morally backward religions will be compelled to ask themselves whether it is possible for them to maintain the claims of a religion which is proving itself so defective morally. Some men can be reached through moral conscience more readily than through religious aspiration ; and it is not improbable that the impact of Western science will in many cases weaken the religious appeal, where the moral will still remain effective. The missionary must, therefore, to-day study the relation of morals to religion, so that he may not only judge justly, but that he may discover the most effective mode of presenting the moral argument of Christianity.

(3) During last century there was in Europe a great enthusiasm for the principle of nationality, and in this century Asia has caught the infection, and in India, China, and Japan we are confronted with an aggressive nationalism, which is sometimes directed against missionary enterprise. Christianity is opposed as a foreign faith ; and attempts are made to revive, purify, and develop the native religion as a patriotic duty. Neo-Hinduism, Neo-Buddhism, and Neo-Islam are all endeavours to arrest the victorious advance of Christianity ; for it is now recognised that none of these religions can in its ancient form hope to wage a successful conflict with it. How is this new situation to be met ? (a) First of all we must recognise that the policy of Christendom in Asia offers some justification for this aggressive patriotism and its resistance of the Christian faith. The missionary, whether he will or not, with or without fault of his own, is exposed to the suspicion and hos-

tility which his fellow-countrymen have evoked ; and he cannot be too careful in dissociating himself from any worldly interests or purposes of his own nation, and in identifying himself with all the higher aims of the country of his adoption. Have missionaries in India always avoided the attitude of the Anglo-Indian community to the native society ?

(b) Secondly, we must be ready to surrender in our creeds, codes, rituals, or polities, whatever is merely Western, European, British, unsuited to the East, Asia, China, Japan, or India. Undoubtedly the Christian Churches in their missionary methods have not been adaptable enough to local conditions, historical associations, and racial characteristics. The consequence has been that converts have been denationalised, that the thought and life of the Christian communities have been far too imitative, following too closely the fashion set by the missionary, and that there has been a lack of any conspicuous originality in any of the native

teachers and leaders. It is an altogether welcome change that the missionary societies are seriously considering the problem of the native Church, how soon and how far it may be made self-supporting, self-governing, and self-developing. We may hope that in the future fresh and worthy contributions to Christian thought and life may return to enrich the Churches which have sent forth the missionaries, that the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese genius and ethos will make more manifest the unsearchable riches of Christ.

(c) There is, however, an error we must here avoid, and a danger against which we must guard ourselves. It is sometimes urged that every country has the religion best suited to it, and so Foreign Missions are an unnecessary interference with the best natural order. The history of religions is the best answer to this objection. The characteristics of a religion are determined by geographical, racial, economic, and social conditions;

but they are not unalterably fixed. Variation rather than permanence marks the religious life of mankind. Contact with another people, an advance in culture and civilisation, an improvement in economic and social conditions have always affected, and cannot but affect the developmenf of a religion. The great Egyptian deity Amon-Ra is an instance of the effect of a political fusion in the realm of religion. The moon is likely to be a more important deity to a pastoral, and the sun to an agricultural people, because the one is concerned about the safety of its flocks, and the other about the growth of its crops. There is a broad general distinction between Semitic and Aryan religion which may be expressed in the terms theocratic and anthropomorphic ; and yet the Semite of the barren desert conceives the divine differently from the Semite of the fertile plain, as may be seen in the Israelite Jehovah and the Canaanite Baal ; also the Aryan of Persia in Zoroastrianism, and the Aryan

of India in Hinduism present us with religions the antitheses of one another—dualism and pantheism. The idea that there is some racial necessity about the forms of a religion, thus barring out our Western faith from Eastern lands, is a delusion, disproved by the history of religions.

(d) These considerations apply also to the contention that Christianity must assume an entirely different form in India than in Britain: for, on the one hand, Christianity is not our native religion, but has transformed our nature, and on the other there is no such rigidity in the Indian nature that Christianity cannot also transform it. The universality of Christianity has been demonstrated in a previous Lecture. In the form in which Christian scholars and thinkers are conceiving Christianity to-day, it is assuming more and more the universally human moral and religious features which make it acceptable to any nation or race. The adaptability of Christianity has its definite

limits in the distinctive purpose of the revelation of God and the redemption of man in Christ Jesus ; but we must never allow ourselves to forget that there meets it in the races to which it is offered a variability of thought and life which makes its acceptance possible without any surrender of its essential character.

(e) Further, the contact of Christendom with heathenism in conquest, commerce, culture, and civilisation, is so altering the conditions which affect religion that not only is it increasingly difficult for the native religions to maintain themselves unaltered, but the receptivity and responsiveness for the Christian faith are being developed. The Hindu student of physical science cannot continue to hold the Hindu cosmology. Confucian ethics can no longer regulate the intercourse of China with the world. Christianity has maintained itself, and is maintaining itself among all these influences which are so transforming the thought and life of mankind ; and is it unreasonable

to believe that as these influences gain their full effect, the strangeness of Christianity will disappear for Hindu, Jap, or Chinaman, and far less adaptation will be necessary than now appears amid conditions so unlike our own? When there is one science, one commerce, one civilisation, one culture, then one morality will assert itself, and one faith will find a congenial environment.

(f) Modern knowledge and thought do not disprove, but confirm the belief in the unity of the human race, physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and its common descent. Nature dooms no people to a permanent inferiority nor confers on any the right to claim an absolute and final superiority. The history of the world is more and more demonstrating that unity. Bitter as are national antagonisms, and deep as are racial prejudices at present, it is not at all a forlorn hope, that the kinship of all peoples shall yet issue in a confederation of the world. What bond so binding as

a common faith? Human progress to this desired end of solidarity depends on the measure in which this spiritual unity is attained.

(g) Foreign Missions will further that world-wide purpose in the measure in which they carry one and the same Gospel unto the ends of the earth. It would be a disaster if in the future national exclusiveness and racial divergence were as in the past to divide Christianity into a number of sects, holding the permanent and universal truths in a multitude of differing and conflicting local and temporal forms. Yet this is the peril which seems to be threatening us as a result of the more tolerant and sympathetic attitude of even the missionaries to other religions. It is easy to exaggerate the Western form of the Gospel which our missionaries are carrying to the East, and just as easy to exaggerate the peculiarities of the Eastern mind which demand a revolutionary transformation of Christian theology to secure the desired adaptation.

It is desirable that our missionaries should hasten slowly both in discarding the supposed Western forms of Christian theology, and in adopting the preferred Eastern forms.

(h) A cautious and reverent scholarship does not support the assumption of what calls itself "liberal" or "new theology." The main positions of the evangelical faith have not been carried by the assault of modern speculation rather than discovery. We need not hasten away from "the solemn shadow of Christ's cross," nor dread the eclipse of the glory of the Resurrection. The non-miraculous and merely humanitarian view of His person and work cannot claim to be finally established. The evangelical presentation of the Gospel is not merely a local and temporal form which may be got rid of without the loss of its permanent and universal substance. The reception of, and response to, that presentation which in all parts of the world the last century of missionary endeavour has

witnessed have proved that it does meet a deep and lasting need of the human soul. I have tried in my Second Lecture to show that the Gospel remains, even when we have made full allowance for all the changes in the presentation of it which our modern knowledge and thought may legitimately and properly demand, and I am confident from my knowledge of man's religious nature as it is disclosed by a comparative study of religions, that it is suited, as it is, to meet the needs of that nature.

(i) Such adaptations as may be found necessary must be only in the subordinate features, and probably these necessary divergencies will prove temporary, and give place to a greater uniformity as the separate nations and distinct races are brought into the increasing human unity. To allow adaptation, so called, to go further, would be to repeat the mistakes of the past history of Christendom. The Christian Gospel was Græcised and the Christian Church

was Romanised to such a degree that ever since the Reformation Christianity has been endeavouring to recover its original form, and to get rid of all foreign accretions. Will Indian pantheism, or Chinese moralism, if allowed free play in changing the Christian faith, be necessarily less perilous and injurious? Since the Reformation the national Churches have maintained the divisions of Christendom, which to-day is less international than it was in the Middle Ages. Are we to encourage an exclusive nationalism in India, China, or Japan which will perpetuate and multiply our unhappy divisions? These questions need only to be asked, and answered in the light of the past to convince us surely that the Gospel we want for the world to hallow and bless the growing unity of mankind is a Gospel which, having been freed from Occidental fetters, has not again fallen into bondage to Oriental thought and life; but a Gospel in which there is neither East nor West, but

only and always the Christ in whom the God over all is revealed, and by whom the one manhood of all mankind is redeemed.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages I have endeavoured to show that none of the changes in contemporary thought justify any indifference to or abandonment of the Foreign Mission enterprise. The obligation is not lessened, but increased by all the progress in thought and life which we have passed in review.

(a) That obligation is enforced by the larger opportunity for the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the Kingdom that even the outward circumstances of the world present. Exploration, invention, commerce, conquest, colonisation have made the world one as it never was before, and have opened the door for the missionary into all lands.

(b) That opportunity brings with it, however, a more serious peril. The

contact of savage races with the civilisation and culture of Europe, of heathen peoples with the Christianity of Europe, is working great changes in thought and life. The old habits and the old beliefs are fast passing away : there is a growing desire to learn the new truths which Europe has to teach, to claim the new life that it has to give. Even the culture and the religion of civilisations so ancient and conservative as the Hindu and the Chinese, are trembling from the shock of meeting European thought and life. If Christianity is not presented adequately, effectively, and immediately, two grievous results will follow.

(i) There will probably be a reaction against European influences which will make the task of world conquest for Christ far harder than it now is ; and the contact of Christian and non-Christian races, if not purified and elevated by the truth and grace of Christ will inflict moral injury on both. The world

will borrow our European vices, if it does not receive from Europe the Gospel; and the civilised man will be brutalised by his relation to the savage, if he is not Christianising him.

(ii) Further, there is the danger of our losing even the gains of the past. Mission work has been going on throughout the world for more than a century, and the harvest of past labours is now beginning to be reaped, not only in converts won, and Churches founded, but still more in a growing desire for preachers of the Gospel among the heathen peoples, who have come to know even a little about the blessings of Christianity. What refinement of cruelty to arouse a discontent we seem unwilling to relieve fully, to awaken a desire of which we are not prepared to supply the perfect satisfaction!

(c) In all these circumstances the responsibility of the citizens of the British Empire is thrown into bold relief. While it is true that it is the duty of all

Christians to do the will and fulfil the wish of Christ that the Gospel should be preached in all the world, yet God has chosen men and peoples, to whom the call of service comes more clearly, and our island's story seems to be such a call. Without daring to interpret the counsels of the Infinite Wisdom, and claiming, as some are only too ready to do, that God has placed us first among the nations for our worth and use to Him ; yet it is clear that the place we fill marks out the part we are called to play in this world. What, then, is our place? On the British Empire the sun never sets. Our flag floats on every breeze. Our ships carry the greater part of the commerce of the world. The goods we make are borne into all lands, and the fruits of many climes fill our storehouses. Our sons have made homes for themselves throughout the habitable globe. Our English language is coming to be a world-wide speech. More than any other people

our interests and efforts are world-wide, and therefore the Christianity that has made us, in spite of mistakes and failures, sins and crimes, leaders in the world's progress, has a world-wide duty laid upon it. We have not limited our commerce, conquests, colonies, civilisation or culture by our island shores; and therefore we cannot limit that religion which alone can preserve these other elements of our national existence as a blessing, and not a curse, to mankind. Our missionaries cannot stay at home because our soldiers and sailors, our explorers and merchants, our colonists and governors have gone abroad throughout the whole earth, and with all other gifts, we are bound to give the world what is our best.

(d) Is our ability equal to the opportunity and the responsibility? As regards the message to be carried to the ends of the earth there is no hindrance or limitation. The Student Volunteer movement has removed what used

to be a common complaint, the lack of men to go abroad. To-day one almost fears to appeal for more offers of service lest the Missionary Societies should be unable to avail themselves of them. The hindrance lies in the lack of the means at the disposal of the Missionary Societies. Wealth is more abundant in our land than it ever was. The standard of living in all classes, except the very poorest, has been raised. What were formerly the luxuries of the few are now the comforts of the many. In quite recent years it is true that wages for labour have not kept pace with the cost of living. But the profits of capital have been going up by leaps and bounds. Why, then, this financial stringency? One is forced to conclude that rich men give a smaller proportion of their wealth than was formerly the case. They are more indulgent to themselves and their families, and less generous to the causes which have a claim on their support than their fathers were.

Conclusion

The defect is moral and spiritual ; the Christian faith is not so deeply rooted and is not bearing so abundant fruit in many lives. What is wanted is spiritual revival, and consequent moral reform. There are signs that times of refreshing are coming from the presence of the Lord. As the enthusiasm and energy of Pentecost followed the certainty of the Risen Lord, so the Church to-day will be revived as it recovers its loosening hold on the Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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